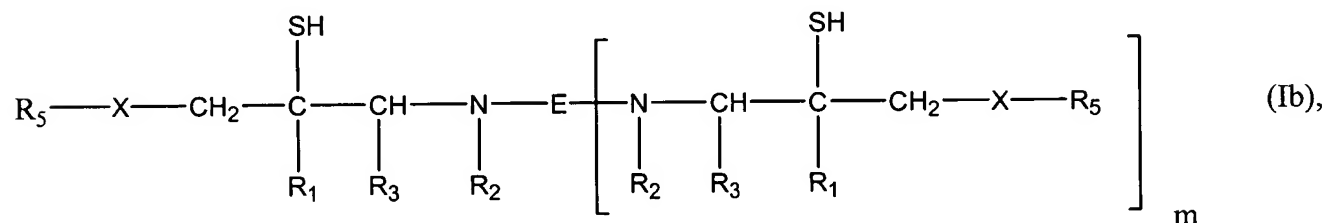
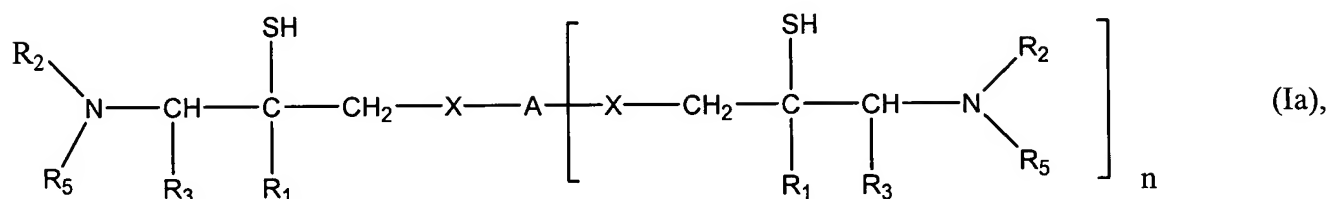


Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A compound of formula Ia or Ib,



wherein A is an (n + 1)-valent aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical and n is an integer from 0 to 5,

E is an (m+1)-valent aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical and m is an integer from 0 to 3,

X is -O-, [[-COO-]] -C(=O)O or -CHR₄-, with R₄ and R₃ together forming an ethylene group,

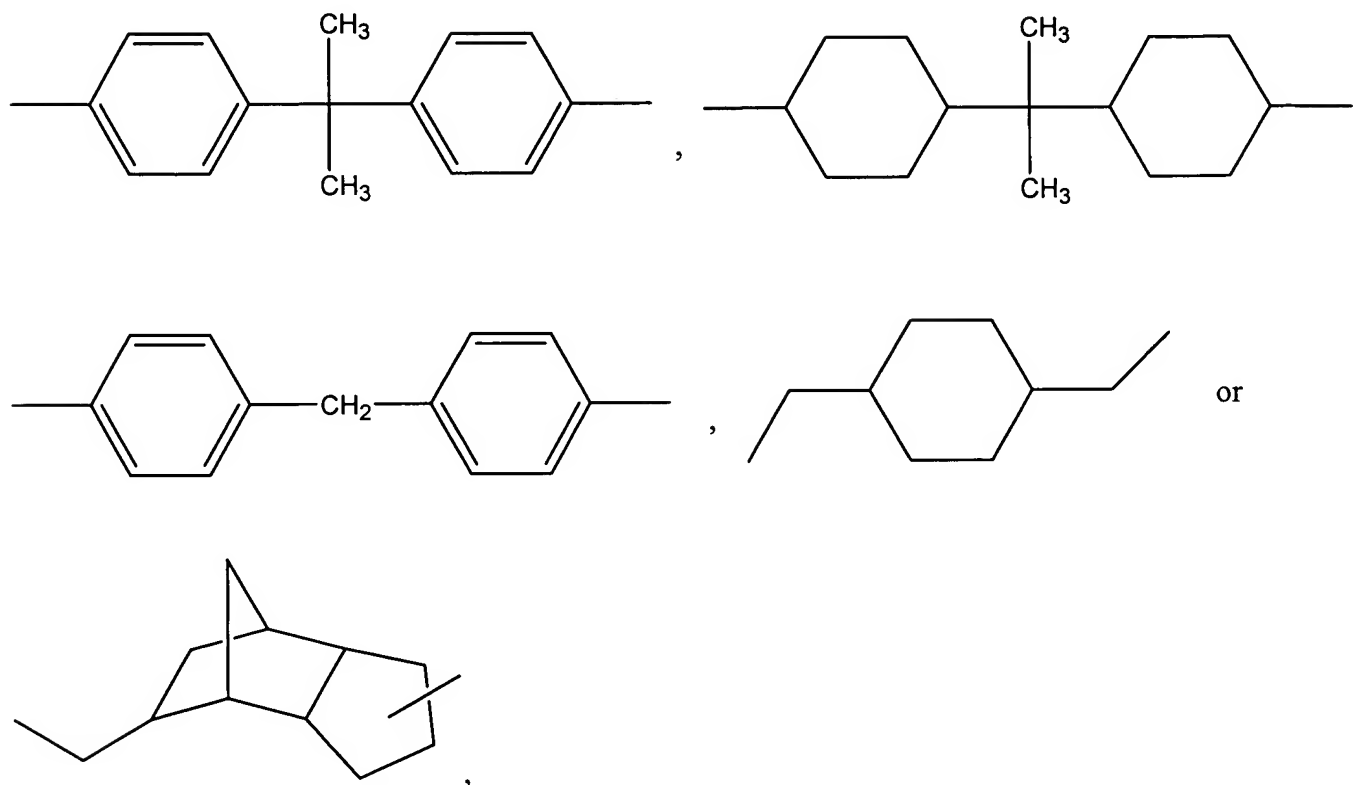
R₁ and R₂ are, each independently of the other, hydrogen or methyl,

R₃ is hydrogen,

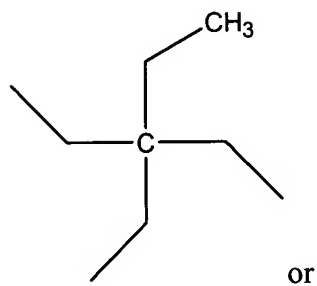
And R₅ is a monovalent aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical.

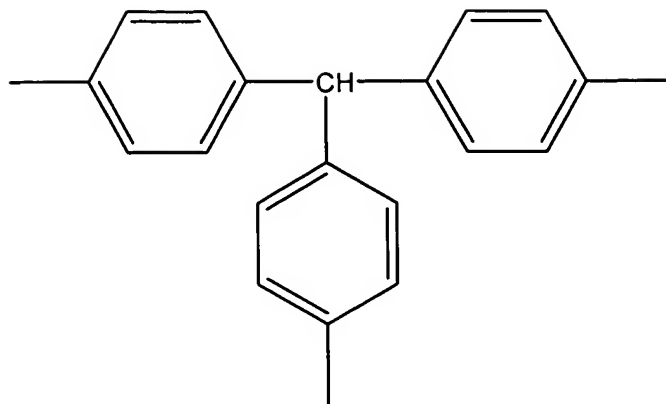
Claim 2 (original): A compound of formula Ia according to claim 1, wherein X is -O- and A is a bivalent radical of a bisphenol or of a cycloaliphatic diol, the radical of a phenol novolak or cresol novolak, the bi- to tetra-valent radical of an isocyanate/polyol adduct or the tri- to hexa-valent radical of a tri- to hexa-functional aliphatic polyol.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A compound of formula Ia according to claim 1, wherein X is -O- and A is a bivalent radical of formula

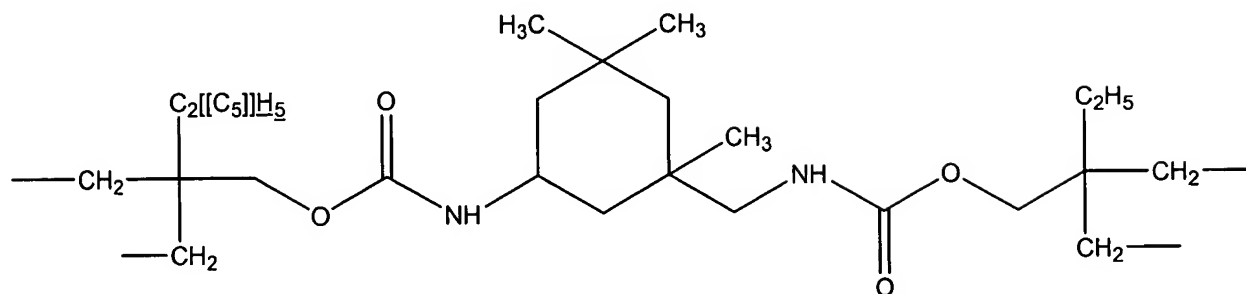


the radical of a phenol novolak or cresol novolak, a trivalent radical of formula





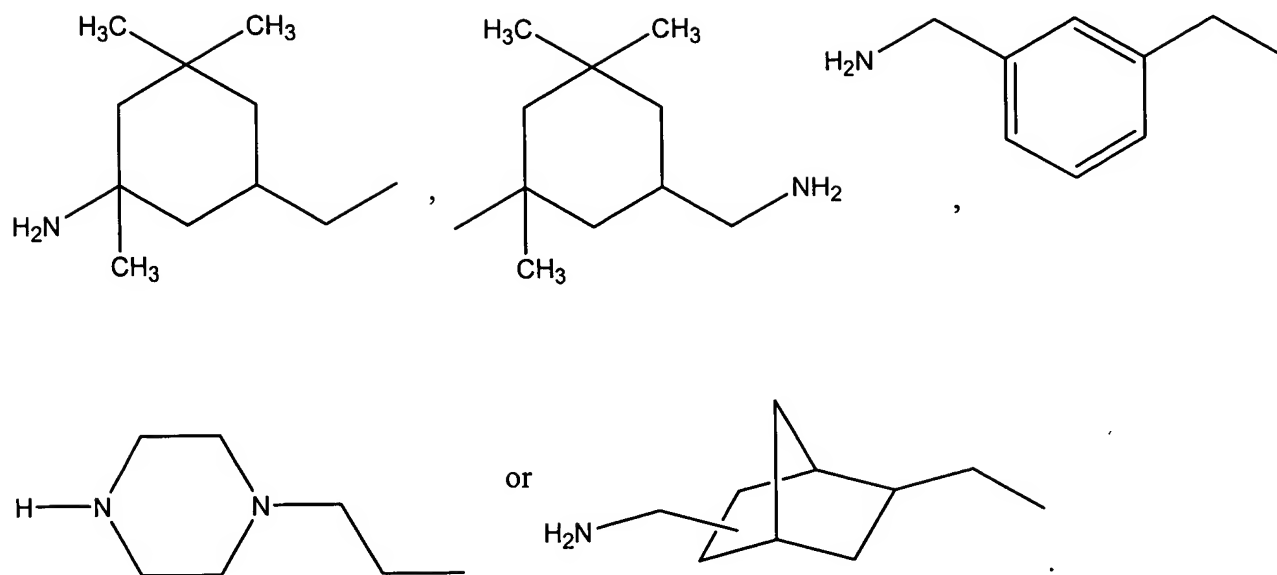
or the tetravalent radical of formula



Claim 4 (original): A compound of formula Ia or Ib according to claim 1, wherein R_5 is C_1 - C_{20} alkyl, C_5 - C_{12} -cycloalkyl, C_6 - C_{10} aryl or C_7 - C_{12} aralkyl, each of which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or more amino groups, hydroxyl groups, C_1 - C_8 alkoxy groups or halogen atoms.

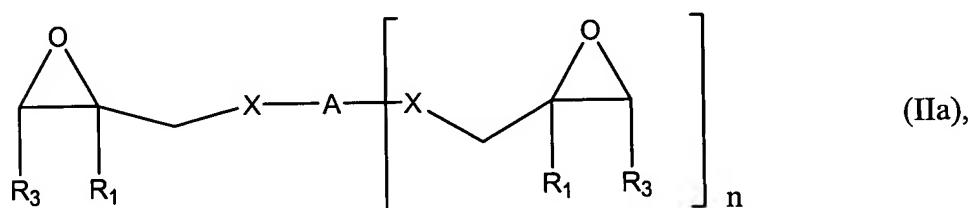
Claim 5 (original): A compound of formula Ia or Ib according to claim 1, wherein R_5 is C_2 - C_{10} alkyl, C_2 - C_{10} aminoalkyl, phenyl, benzyl, cyclohexyl or a radical of formula $H_2N-Z-CH_2-NH-$, wherein Z is a bivalent cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical or a radical of formula $-(CH_2CH_2NH)_k-CH_2-$, wherein k is 2 or 3.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A compound of formula Ia or Ib according to claim 1, wherein R_5 is n-butyl, n-octyl, cyclohexyl, benzyl, 2-aminoethyl, 4-(aminomethyl)pentyl, 5-amino-2-methylpentyl, 3-dimethylaminopropyl, 3-methylaminopropyl, 4-aminocyclohexyl or a radical of formula $-CH_2CH_2NHCH_2CH_2NH_2$,



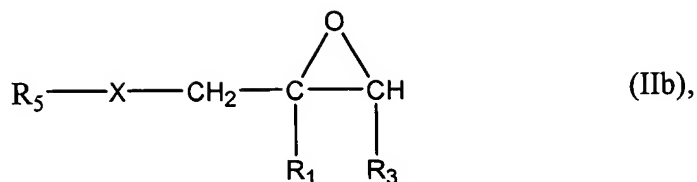
Claim 7 (original): A compound of formula Ia or Ib according to claim 1, wherein X is O- and R₁ and R₃ are hydrogen.

Claim 8 (original): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula Ia according to claim 1 by reacting a compound of formula IIa



wherein A, X, R₁, R₃ and n are as defined in claim 1,
with thiourea or a thiocyanate and subsequently reacting the resulting episulfide with an amine of formula R₅-NH-R₂ wherein R₅ and R₂ are as defined in claim 1.

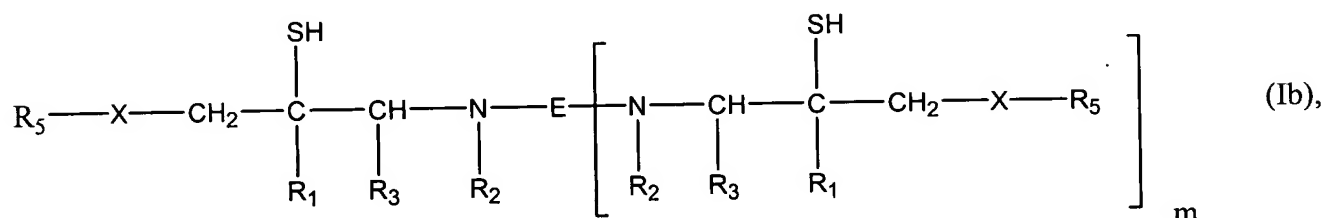
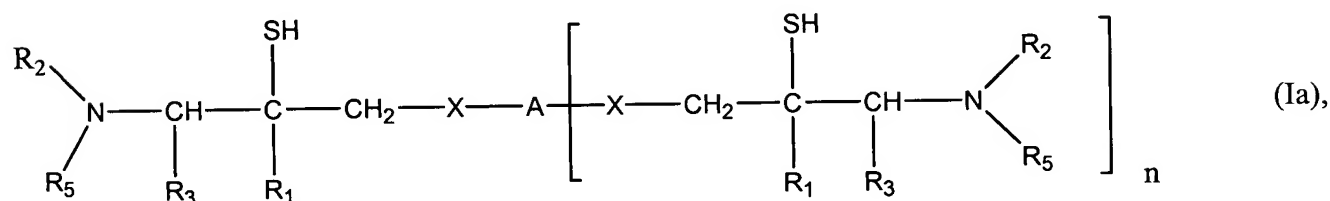
Claim 9 (original): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula Ib according to claim 1 by reacting a compound of formula IIb



wherein X, R₁, R₃ and R₅ are as defined in claim 1,
with thiourea or a thiocyanate and subsequently reacting the resulting episulfide with a
polyamine of formula E-(NHR₂)_{m+1} wherein E, R₂ and m are as defined in claim 1.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A composition comprising:

- (A) an epoxy resin and
- (B) a compound of formula Ia or Ib ~~according to claim 1~~



wherein A is an (n + 1)-valent aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical and n is an integer from 0 to 5,

E is an (m+1)-valent aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical and m is an integer from 0 to 3,

X is -O-, -C(=O)O or -CHR₄-, with R₄ and R₃ together forming an ethylene group,

R₁ and R₂ are, each independently of the other, hydrogen or methyl,

R₃ is hydrogen or R₃ and R₄ together form an ethylene group,

And R₅ is a monovalent aliphatic, cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical.

Claim 11 (currently amended): ~~A~~ The composition according to claim 10 further comprising ~~in~~ addition,

(C) a polyamine.

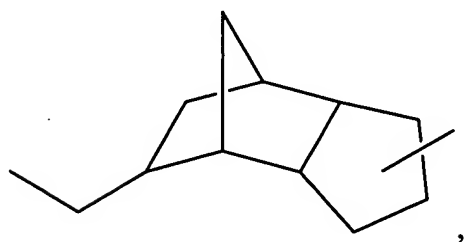
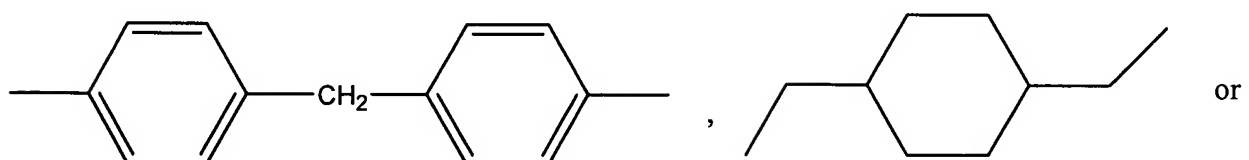
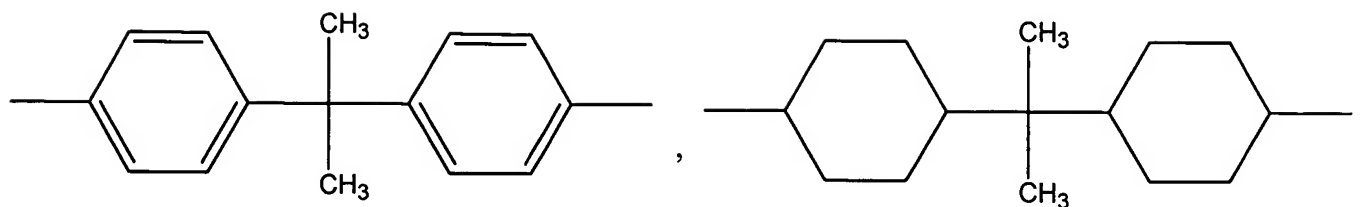
Claim 12 (currently amended): ~~A~~ The composition according to either claim 10 or claim 11 comprising component B and, where applicable, component C in such amounts that the sum of ~~the~~ amine and mercaptan equivalents is from 0.5 to 2.0 equivalents, based on one epoxy equivalent.

Claim 13 (original): A cross-linked product obtainable by curing a composition according to claim 10.

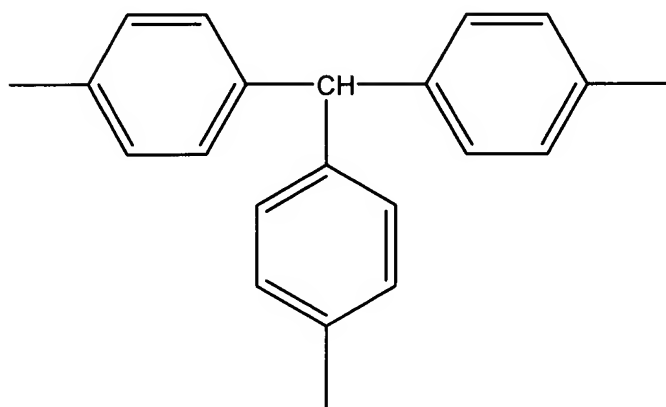
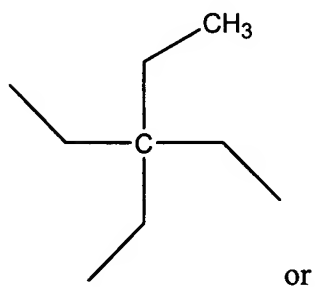
Claim 14 (cancelled)

Claim 15 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein in the compound of formula Ia, X is -O- and A is a bivalent radical of a bisphenol or of a cycloaliphatic diol, a radical of a phenol novolak or cresol novolak, a bi- to tetra-valent radical of an isocyanate/polyol adduct or a tri- to hexa-valent radical of a tri- to hexa-functional aliphatic polyol.

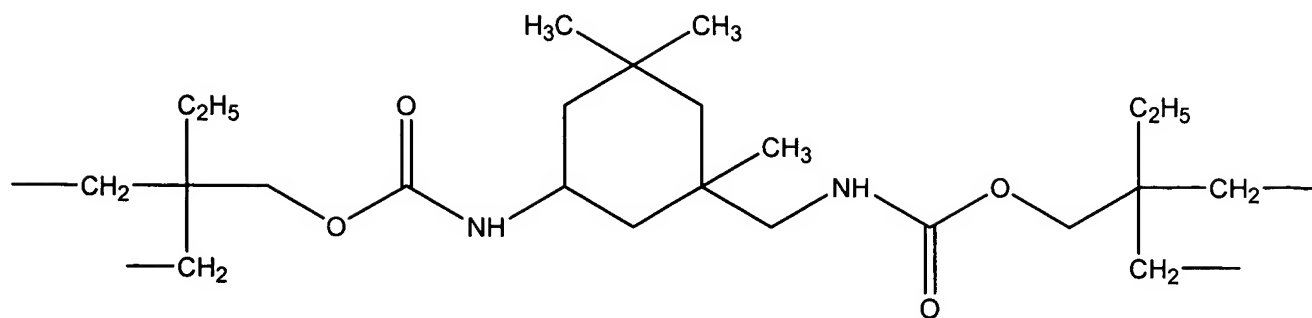
Claim 16 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein in the compound of formula Ia, X is -O- and A is a bivalent radical of formula



a radical of a phenol novolak or cresol novolak, a trivalent radical of formula



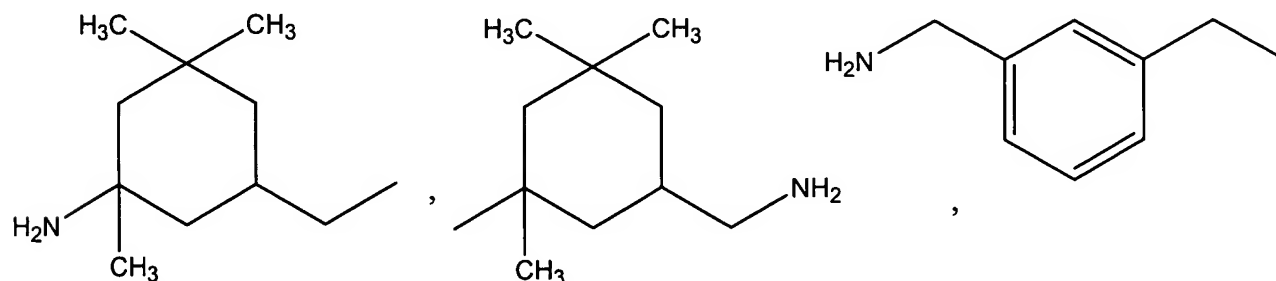
or a tetravalent radical of formula

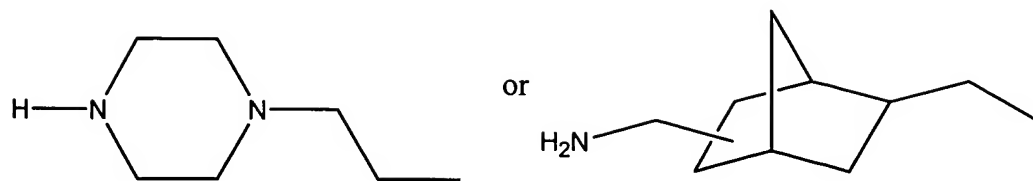


Claim 17 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein R_5 is C_1 - C_{20} alkyl, C_5 - C_{12} -cycloalkyl, C_6 - C_{10} aryl or C_7 - C_{12} aralkyl, each of which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or more amino groups, hydroxyl groups, C_1 - C_8 alkoxy groups or halogen atoms.

Claim 18 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein R_5 is C_2 - C_{10} alkyl, C_2 - C_{10} aminoalkyl, phenyl, benzyl, cyclohexyl or a radical of formula $H_2N-Z-CH_2-NH-$, wherein Z is a bivalent cycloaliphatic, araliphatic or aromatic radical or a radical of formula $-(CH_2CH_2NH)_k-CH_2-$, wherein k is 2 or 3.

Claim 19 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein R_5 is n-butyl, n-octyl, cyclohexyl, benzyl, 2-aminoethyl, 4-(aminomethyl)pentyl, 5-amino-2-methylpentyl, 3-dimethylaminopropyl, 3-methylaminopropyl, 4-aminocyclohexyl or a radical of formula $-CH_2CH_2NHCH_2CH_2NH_2$,





Claim 20 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein X is O- and R₁ and R₃ are hydrogen.

Claim 21 (new): The composition according to claim 11, wherein the polyamine is a cycloaliphatic or aliphatic amine.

Claim 22 (new): The composition according to claim 21, wherein the polyamine has the formula R₅-NH-R₂ or E-(NHR₂)_{m+1}, wherein R₅, R₂, E and m are defined as in claim 10.

Claim 23 (new): The composition according to either claim 10 or claim 11 comprising component B and, where applicable, component C in such amounts that the sum of amine and mercaptan equivalents is from 0.8 to 1.5 equivalents, based on one epoxy equivalent.

Claim 24 (new): The composition according to either claim 10 or claim 11 comprising component B and, where applicable, component C in such amounts that the sum of amine and mercaptan equivalents is from 0.9 to 1.2 equivalents, based on one epoxy equivalent.

Claim 25 (new): The composition according to claim 10, wherein X is -O- or -C(=O)O.